

## Working in Washington

The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Foreign Affairs Oral History Project

AMBASSADOR ARNOLD L. RAPHEL

Interviewed by: Self

Initial interview date: October 2, 1986

Copyright 1998 ADST

### WORKING IN WASHINGTON

Ambassador Raphel spoke at the Foreign Service Institute to Foreign Service officers who were newly assigned to the Department of State after having served overseas. The purpose of the talk was to bring them to understand the environment in which they would be working.

Ambassador Raphel was killed when a bomb exploded in an aircraft in which he, the president of Pakistan, Zia, and other Pakistani officials, were flying on August 17, 1988.

[First minute of speech cut off.]...talking about how you function in this town and survive. It is useful to talk about what kind of environment you face when you walk into that building [the Department of State] that first time. Whether you are coming back from overseas or just starting anew. When you return to D.C. and you go into that building, coming in with you everyday are five thousand-five hundred telegrams from overseas. That is the average number of telegrams that we get in the Department of State everyday.

Out of those five thousand-five hundred telegrams, maybe between ten and forty find their way to the Secretary of State...depending upon the Secretary and how much he reads.

## Library of Congress

The great majority of those cables will be notice cables. So, when you are out there in the field and you are turning out messages the chances that one of them is ever going to get to the “man” who makes the decision, is kind of slim. We're talking ten out of fifty-five hundred a day.

You all of a sudden find your life in Washington, as Graham Allison called it “bureaucratic-centric”. Tradecraft is getting things done. And that's what really matters in Washington and really matters in the State Department. It is a very tough system within the State Department. And, not only within the District generally but especially within the State Department. Because Washington, to state the obvious, is very different from working overseas.

The first difference, and a major one, is it is extraordinarily politicized. If you are a political officer or an admin officer in Bangui or Bangkok, you are not going to be too concerned about the politicization of the issues you are working on. If you're working on Arms Control or Central American Policy or East-West Relations in Washington, you find yourself in the middle of a political maelstrom.

Second, is an extraordinary amount of press interest. Once again, if you are in the Embassy in Delhi or in the Consulate General in Frankfurt the number of times you get called by a first line U.S. reporter to ask your views on a story is hardly ever, if at all. At the State Department, we have by all accounts, the best press corps in all Washington...in terms of being smart, sophisticated and savvy. An extraordinary amount of press interest focuses on that building. And when you return you find yourself, for better or worse, in the middle of that kind of focus.

Third, is that you have got an extraordinary amount of direct Congressional interest. If you are sitting in Kathmandu or Milan, once in a while you get a Congressional, usually generated by a staff person and signed by an auto-pen, asking about their constituent who

## Library of Congress

disappeared smoking some exotic substance three years ago and what has happened to him.

When you get back here all of a sudden you find out that there are Congressmen really interested in trade, really interested in relations with Israel, interested in how we treat foreign missions and not only their staffers call, they call. Congress is there and it is always looking at you.

Another important difference is that there are other very important actors in town, other than the State Department. One very nice thing about working overseas is that there is a guy in charge and he is called the Ambassador. And if the Ambassador decides he wants to do something then generally people will listen to him...no matter who they work for in the mission. If the Ambassador decides that the Defense Attach# is going to go in and say something or going to do a certain report...there is a fine old tradition of listening to the Ambassador. There ain't no Ambassador in Washington. There is someone called the Secretary of State, who runs the State Department. And in this Administration, at this moment has more influence than anyone else in Foreign Policy. But you have also got the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs who decides what military assets are going to go where in the world. And he will make those decisions...not the Secretary of State.

You have a Secretary of Defense who feels that when it comes to military assets and arms control he is one of the key players if not the key player. You have got the Secretary of Commerce who feels that when you talk about trade with the Soviet Union, he is the guy who has got to make the key decisions around town. All of a sudden you find that there are really thirty-eight Ambassadors all around town all of whom think they are running foreign policy and, to a certain extent, they are.

You also find yourself in the midst of what is the most vicious bureaucracy in Washington, when you go into the State Department. This town eats people alive bureaucratically. The State Department is worse than any other agency. I am convinced of that. One

## Library of Congress

reason, I think, is that other agencies have things that they can deal with, that they can move around. You can move military assets. You can give the farmers 3 billion dollars in subsidies. You can open a new school in Dubuque. At the State Department, we don't have things, substance to move around or give away. All we have got is policy and words and we tend to become much more acquisitive and protective of them. John Howe, now a Vice-Admiral in the Navy, he was Director of Political-Military Affairs at the State Department three years ago. He, at that time, was the youngest Rear-Admiral in the United States Navy. He became Director of Political-Military Affairs at the State Department because the Secretary wanted to have somebody there who really knew the military. He was my boss when he was in Political-Military Affairs. John had worked for Nelson Rockefeller as his Special Assistant, when he was Vice President. He worked for Henry Kissinger as his Military Assistant. He worked for Casper Weinberger as his Military Assistant. He worked for Frank Carlucci as his Military Assistant. John Howe knew more about bureaucracies in Washington than almost anyone else. And I once asked him, after about two months on the job, what struck him as different about the State Department. How was State different than any other organization around town. And without hesitating, he said, "The viciousness of the bureaucracy." And I said, "John, what are you talking about? And why is it any worse here in the State Department? You have been at the NSC, you've been in DOD, JCS, and that's where they are really tough." He said, "No, no...the main difference is...and I'll give you an example. In the Pentagon, if you start talking about something of major importance to the Navy, like where do they move ships, and they find out that you are talking about it without them knowing about it, they will come in and shoot your knee caps off. At the State Department, it can be late at night, I can be in bed, I can roll over and say, "I wonder what they are doing in EUR about Arms Control" and they break down the bedroom door and shoot off my knee caps." So the bureaucratic sensitivity in the State Department is much worse than anywhere else in town."

I think that is absolutely right. The other story that John told that is true is that the Department of Defense, just about five years ago, about ten years ago now, set up a

## Library of Congress

Secretariat, an organization like SS that takes care of paper and serves the Secretary of State. And the Defense Department sent a team over to State to see how a Secretariat ran. And they asked the Director of the Secretariat at that time, what is the main purpose of this organization? And the State Department Officer said, "Well, it is to protect the Secretary, to make sure that he gets everyone's views and all the information he needs." And the people from DOD said, "We don't understand. If you are going to send a piece of paper to the Secretary, obviously if you write the piece of paper, you are going to make sure that everyone clears it who has some interest in it. Otherwise you are not serving the Secretary well. Isn't that the way it works at State?" Well of course at State we were always trying to sneak papers into the Secretary without anyone else seeing them. We said...the head of the Secretariat said, "It doesn't work that way here. Someone has to protect the Secretary of State." And they guy from Defense said, "But over at Defense, everyone works for the Secretary of Defense." And the guy from State said, "Yeah, but everybody at State works for a regional bureau and the Secretary has got to protect himself." That is the reason that Defense didn't have a Secretariat for fifteen years while we did. Once again it is a lot tougher place to operate in the State Department.

So the basic difference when you are coming from overseas is when you are overseas you are a substantive officer. Whether you are doing Admin or doing political work. And that is basically your job. When you get to Washington, D.C., and the State Department, the only question is how do you get things done? It doesn't matter how smart you are; how much you know about migration in the Sahel. If you don't know how to get things done in Washington, you don't count and you don't matter.

You have two options if you walk into that environment. One, you can be the pristine officer...the traditional Foreign Service Officer. And all of FSO's, of course, are very bright and we graduate near the top of our class and we are smarter than most other people, we know that the way to learn to do anything well, is that you study. You learn how to be a Foreign Service Officer just like you learn English History. There used to be something called the Mid-Level Course here at FSI. It died and no-one came to the wake. And why

## Library of Congress

no-one came to the wake is because one of the purposes of the Mid-Level Course was to teach you how to be a good Foreign Service Officer.

I have a quotation from one of the readings. This was required reading for everyone in the Mid-Level Course. It was on how organizations work in Washington. Sort of the equivalent of this course. All mid-level officers had to read this. This is how it works and this is sort of the pristine approach...you sit down and you read it and you learn it. "Organizations are viewed as open systems in constant interaction with their environments, receiving inputs and feedback and effecting the environment with their outputs. The core concepts in this scheme are the environment inputs, the organizational sub-system and outputs. An organization's environment has both remote and proximate elements. While the remote environment consists of those socio-cultural, ecological and technological conditions with indirect effects on internal structures and processes among which are cultural norms, patterns of social stratification and international monetary relations (all of which may become proximate elements for some organizations)." That is one approach to learning [Laughter] about bureaucracy in Washington.

Another approach is that you become a player, you become part of the game. You become, to use those words scorned by the pristine Foreign Service Officer, a bureaucrat or an operator or a manipulator, those kind of things that we normally don't do as good Foreign Service Officers. Politicians do those things.

Joe Sisco, who was my boss when he was Assistant Secretary and then Under Secretary, was, I think, the best bureaucratic player in Washington. In addition to being a very bright, active FSO, he once said, when I asked him what the problem was with the Foreign Service, "What do you think the main problem is?" And he immediately answered, he said, "The problem with the Foreign Service is that we have too many Foreign Service Officers and too many bureaucrats making the very same point."

## Library of Congress

So, how are you affected? You come back and this is what you find. This is the environment you are operating in. You decide to set aside the books on how you are bureaucratically effective and you decide you are going to learn by becoming part of the game. That's how you are going to get things done. To be effective, you have got to move on several fronts. A key thing you have to do and I used this word before it became "trendy", so, I have no shame in using it now," you have to network. You have to control the process. You have to know everything that is going on.

I'll share an anecdote that describes what I mean. Back in the early 1970's when we first had the spate of hijackings. With great concern about what we were going to do about the hijackings and terrorism...how are we going to handle this issue. Joe Sisco was Assistant Secretary for Near Eastern Affairs. And the Secretary at the time, Bill Rogers, asked him to chair a meeting of all the Assistant Secretaries concerned with this issue and come up with some recommendations about what we are going to do about international terrorism. This was fifteen years ago. So, Joe chaired this meeting. It was soon after I joined the bureau. I was a young FSO-8 in those days. They used to have FSO-8's. And I was sitting in a chair in the corner as notetaker. And Sisco went around the table and said, "OK, what are we going to do about international terrorism?" And he first turned to the legal advisor who said, "Well, there is an International Bar Committee meeting in Geneva next week and we will arrange to get a resolution introduced condemning terrorism and supporting nations that fight terrorism", with such and such legal finding and on and on. Then he turned to the Assistant Secretary for International Organizations and said, "What do you think we should do about fighting terrorism?" He said, "Well, it is going to be discussed in the 5th Committee at the United Nations next week so we will get out instructions to our mission in the UN to raise the issue in the 5th Committee and we will draft a resolution to introduce to the General Assembly and will send out instructions overseas to support it." The other regional bureaus said the same thing. The Assistant Secretary for European Affairs said, "Well we can send someone to Europe and talk to the Heads of State and talk to the relevant people in the Foreign Ministries and Interior Ministries and try to work out a

## Library of Congress

coordinated plan for how we can cooperate in fighting terrorism.” The Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs talked about a comprehensive public diplomacy effort to heighten the awareness of the American People.

It gets all the way around the table and it gets back to Joe Sisco and he said, “Those are all very good ideas and we will have to do all of them but, first and most importantly, we are going to have to realize that we are not going to be able to do anything about terrorism. It is going to be with us for years. We can't bring an end to terrorism. We might be able to contain it a little bit, might be able to cut back on it, but it is always going to be an issue. The second thing we have to realize is that everybody in this town is going to want to control that issue. Everyone is going to want to run it because it is a sexy issue. The third thing we've got to realize is that if anybody but us does it, it is going to be done poorly because the State Department knows better how to work overseas to control this issue than does Defense, the CIA, NSC or anyone else. So obviously the first thing we have got to do is make sure we run the issue. What does that mean? It means a couple of things. First thing we have got to get is a resolution in the Senate commending the State Department for its vigorous actions and encouraging it to do more of the same. I will draft a resolution which we will get Hugh Scott, who was the Republican leader, to introduce, and we will get that resolution passed next week. And the second thing we've got to do is get the NSC to put together a national decision document which the President will sign which will commend the State Department for all of its actions in fighting terrorism and will instruct the State Department to appoint an inter-agency coordinator to combat terrorism. He will sit in the State Department and every agency will be beholden to him, and he will be the coordinator and will work out of this building. And then we will do backgrounding to the press, explaining how the President is really depending on the Department to do this and how it looks like the Department is going to have control of this issue. And then once we get control of the issue, then we will worry about what we are going to do about it. But if we don't control it, we can't do anything about it.”



## Library of Congress

The following week the Senate passed the resolution and the President signed the NSDD and an office was set up which was called Combating Terrorism, which all of you know is still in the State Department and is still directed by a Foreign Service Officer and everybody around town reports to him on combating terrorism. State Department controls the issue the way it has for fifteen years.

People might bat us around town the way they do on every bureaucratic issue. Everybody tries to get a piece of the action, but it is still with us. We haven't found any answers yet but have done a couple of things that have helped, I think. But the point is still there. You have got to control the issue before you can do anything about it.

Another thing you have to control is information. For without information, without knowing what is going on, you can't be an effective player. Another anecdote on that issue. Cyrus Vance was Secretary of State. I was his Special Assistant. And we were in his office one day and he was talking to people about the Iranian hostage issue, he was working on the hostages, working on the Middle East Peace Process. And someone came in from my bureau, the Near-East South Asian Bureau and said, "Mr. Secretary, there is a vote coming up at the UN to condemn Israeli practices in the occupied territories, the kind of thing we've voted on in the past and we should vote for it again." The Secretary said, "Okay", and the guy left. Next day, headlines in the paper: United States to condemn Israel. And it was four days before the New York Primary, which Jimmy Carter lost and Hamilton Jordan to this day blames the State Department for the fact that Hamilton Jordan lost that Primary, because we voted to condemn Israel four days before the Primary. Jimmy Carter then went public, saying we voted the wrong way and apologized for it, saying we should have voted the other way. It was one of the great fiascoes of the Administration. And why? Because we didn't have information. It turns out that yes, we had voted for those very similar resolutions in the past. But at Camp David, Carter and Begin had agreed that the United States would not vote to condemn Israel occupation of Jerusalem. And that was mentioned in this resolution. Carter either didn't tell us, or we

## Library of Congress

forgot and we basically went against the President's commitment and voted for it. Not only did it anger the Israelis who thought the President was breaking his commitment but Jimmy lost the Primary. At the time, it was a decision that we didn't even focus on but that we didn't have information about, and we made the wrong decision.

Another thing that you have to have in your network is that you have got to know the Hill. You have got to know staffers. You have got to do this very carefully because we have a Bureau of Congressional Relations that feels fairly proprietary about its authority to work with the Hill. And you have got to let that bureau know what you are doing. But if I were the Jordan desk officer, I would be damn sure that I would know the staffer on the House Foreign Affairs Committee Subcommittee doing the Middle East who is going to worry about Jordan. Same thing on the Senate side. If anything is going to come up about Jordan, I'll feel confident that he or she is going to talk to me about it. And if anything is going to come up about Jordan that I need help on I know who to go to. If I was in CA in the Department and was concerned about change in the Immigration Legislation I would sure know who the staffer was in the Immigration Committees on the Hill who I could talk to. Just stay in touch with them and ask them to stay in touch with me. Not to undercut the bureau or to undercut Congressional relations, but just so you have got a network there that you can call on. You help them and they help you.

It is also crucial to have contacts in other agencies. If I were in EB working on fibers and roots (whatever those are), I would be certain that I knew the guy in Commerce, the man or woman in STR who were working on the same issue. And when it came time to work that issue inter-agency, I know I could go to the phone and know everybody at the working level. The people who are going to be writing the memos around town who are working those issues. I can go to them and cooperate with them just like they will cooperate with me. If I don't know who they are, then I cannot do my job.

Another central part of the network is the press. This is also a very sensitive issue. Some bureaus take the view that no-one below Deputy Assistant Secretary should talk to the

## Library of Congress

press because the Press Corps is so damn smart that you can never come out ahead. And, one of them may be writing a story about Libya, and not have any facts, but will call up and say, "I understand they are brushing off the contingency plans about Libya. And I understand that they are looking at a meeting in the White House in a couple of weeks." And the Libya desk officer will say, "Gee, I knew about the contingency plans but I didn't know about the meeting at the White House." So, there he has confirmation of the contingency plans. And he calls the next guy and says, "something about the contingency plans and I understand that they are talking about an even more vigorous strike than last time." "Oh no, no...same kind of strike as last time." [Laughter] Pretty soon, he has his story.

So, you've got to be really careful in dealing with them. In our bureau, in NEA, we take the view that if the press has a story, the best person to talk to them, outside the front office, is the Desk Officer who is working the story and who knows the issue. And if there is going to be a story in the press, much rather that we would try to influence it in a way that is going to try to reflect the best possible way on this Administration's policy than to stand back and let the story go its own way. But you have to be very careful in dealing with them.

The key to dealing with the press is never lie. Never. Bob McKloskey, who is the best spokesman we ever had said there are two good reasons never to lie to the American press. One, is that it is wrong. And two, is that you always get caught. And the second point is probably more important than the first. Always be straight with them or say, "I can't talk about it."

Another part of your network that you have got to have are 7th Floor Staffers. Once again, it doesn't matter if you are working in the "A" bureau, you are working in INR, or you are working in AF. When you draft that piece of paper, an action memo to Mike Armacost, it is much in your interest to know what staffer in Mike Armacost's office is going to handle that piece of paper. And to say that piece of paper is coming up and to find out does Mike have

## Library of Congress

any certain views on this issue; should the paper be done in any certain way to enhance your prospects for getting the paper through.

You should have those contacts among staffers all along the 7th floor, in every office. Because staffers are the people who do the work. Who move the paper. Who control access and information. Those are the people. You have to have support of your network.

Also, you have to have an appreciation for political realities. This effects every bureau in the State Department. A good example is my own bureau...the Middle East. My bureau has always been split in the view of what should this bureau, NEA, recommend to the Secretary of State in terms of the Arab-Israeli conflict. And the pristine Foreign Service Officers, for whom I have a lot of respect and they are real professionals and maybe very experienced Arabists say, "We get paid to give the Secretary of State advice on what is the best way to protect and further American national interests in the Middle East and if on a certain issue it makes more sense to do something favorable to Jordan rather than Israel, then we should tell him that because that is what we get paid for. We weren't elected by anyone to give the Secretary of State political advice. We are not political types." So, if it makes sense to sell Jordan seventy-five F-16's and if they really need them and if it's justified in terms of our interests in the Middle East, then we should go to the Secretary of State and say, "We've got to sell seventy-five F-16's to Jordan."

The other school in our bureau is that's all well and good. The Secretary does deserve the best advice. But unless we are cognizant of the political realities our advice will be ignored or count for nothing. And if we send up a piece of paper from Dick Murphy, our Assistant Secretary, to the Secretary saying Jordan needs seventy-five F-16's, our most advanced fighters, and they have got a need for them and it will advance our policy in the Middle East, the Secretary will look at that and think, "What are these guys smoking?" Don't they realize that there is no chance in the world that Congress is going to approve seventy-five F-16's for Jordan. That the political will is not there to do that. And we don't have the votes. And the recommendation will be ignored.

## Library of Congress

The thing that you've got to do is figure out how do you walk the line between what's good for your policy and what is doable. And probably where you end up is saying to the Secretary, "Some people want to sell F-16's to Jordan. That doesn't make any sense, Mr. Secretary, it is not doable. But Jordan has some legitimate defensive needs because of Syria. And here is a menu of things we would like to do in terms of enhanced defense cooperation, selling them air-to-air missiles for the aircraft they have, selling them radar, perhaps a high-level visit. Here's the kind of thing that we can do to help Jordan, to help our policy and it is doable. And that way you have some effect on what decisions are made.

Those are the kind of thoughts that best come out of the front office though, rather than a desk officer, for obvious reasons. But, you should always keep in mind that your front office is going to be working with the political reality or it won't count. It won't have any say. Another thing you should do to become an effective operator around town is, if you have a chance work on a task force, get involved in crisis management. There is no faster way to learn how this town operates than to be called up to the operations center at 4:00 a.m. and be told one of our planes has just been hijacked. It is landing in Beirut, and you are one of eight people on a task force and you've got to handle the issue. And you've got to start worrying about press guidance, calling the families, making sure everything is okay, informing Congress of what is going on, coordinating with the CIA to find out what kind of information they have, coordinating with INR, doing an update for the Secretary of State, keeping Mike Armacost informed, staying on the phone with other agencies, moving military assets—I mean all that going on around you is a very fast way to learn how Washington operates.

Last year, out of all the crisis task forces established in the operations center, sixty percent of them were run by NEA. Forty percent by all the other bureaus. Which is an indication of who gets crises. Most of them effect our region. And if you are in a functional bureau, like CA or INR, they are always looking for volunteers for those task forces. If you are in

## Library of Congress

a regional bureau, you should tell your executive director or executive office, "If we get a crisis, I'd like to serve on the task force." Because it is really the way you learn. A good example is 1974. NEA in 1974, gave up Cyprus, Turkey, and Greece to the EUR (the European Bureau). It was a trade. In exchange, we got all of North Africa. It was a bizarre trade. And one I would have never made. But that is what happened. After we gave up Cyprus, Turkey and Greece to the European Bureau, the Turks liberated (depending upon your view) Cyprus. Joe Sisco had just become Under Secretary. The European Assistant Secretary came to Joe and said, "We've got a problem. We have never run a war. Since 1945. I mean, what do you do? How do you handle invasions? What are you supposed to do with a crisis like this?" So Joe agreed that we would send a small team from NEA. So we put together a small group of officers who run wars everyday and we sent them to the European Bureau. We showed them how you set up a task force, how you manage a crisis, how you run a war. And they stayed there about a week. We then called them back. I was getting very nervous. They were beginning to wear their jackets and they had those little silk hankies and those little things under their collars to make their ties stick up. [Laughter] I was getting very concerned that they were turning into EUR types so we brought them back. We brought our people back. But it was a great lesson in how you manage crises.

Two more points. One other one to be effective: you've got to realize that the White House sets the agenda. Always remember that. The White House is in charge. What the issues are is easy to determine. Central America is an issue. Mid-East peace process is an issue. Arms control is an issue. But, how the issues are managed and when they are managed, only the White House decides. They decide on priorities and they decide on timing.

Last year in January and February we felt the peace process was moving in a very positive direction. King Hussein was having talks with Arafat. We felt really close to getting direct negotiations. We went to the White House and said, "It is really important now that we show support for Jordan. Here is an arms package we put together. Jordan — the King is hanging out there, he's exposed and we've got to show support for him in terms of his

## Library of Congress

position in Jordan and in terms of his position in the Middle East and the best way to do it is to sell him the arms he wants. And here is what is in the package.

The White House came back and said, "The President has three key issues right now before him in Congress. Contra funding, the defense budget, and the M-X. They are a hell of a lot more important than worrying about whether the King of Jordan gets arms." And that's the way it goes. We have to do it later. And Jordan's arms package got postponed. It made us very unhappy. But my guess would be, if I were sitting over in the White House and I were the Chief of Staff, I would have probably said exactly the same thing. In terms of Ronald Reagan's agenda, Contras, M-X and the defense budget are more important than selling arms to Jordan.

And we made the fight about why our issue was important but you've got to realize that when you lose it is not because your issue doesn't count. It is because someone else has a much broader agenda than we do.

Finally, this is an important thing to keep in mind. When you operate in Washington, there are moral and ethical considerations. It is unusual to hear that around this town, and it is something that we tend to overlook. Because we are hush-up bureaucrats. We are wheelers and dealers. We want to get done what our bureau needs to get done. And moral and ethical concerns are something that the pristine officers read about when they study epistemology. But we don't worry about those things.

Ed Muskie, soon after he became Secretary of State, at first didn't really work the hours that Vance did. He sort of tried to keep the hours that he did on the Hill. He was in my view an excellent Secretary. He had extraordinarily good judgement and innate good sense. The first couple of weeks there he tried to leave early. And his second week there, the South Africans made an "incursion" (as we used to call it) into Angola and killed a number of people and blew up some Angolan towns, Angolan military forces and went back into South Africa. And the issue was, what are we going to do about this incursion.

## Library of Congress

And a resolution was introduced into the Security Council to condemn South Africa for its incursion into Angola. Lord Carrington, who was the Foreign Secretary at that time in the UK, sent a personal message to Ed Muskie. They were old, personal friends. He said, "Ed, I've not asked you for any favors since you've become Secretary. This is the first communication I've sent you. But I need your support on this South African issue. And I want your help on abstaining on the resolution. We have major interests in South Africa and this is not the right way to influence the South Africans and condemnation will only hurt our efforts."

Muskie convened a little meeting in his office. Just his principal advisors on African affairs and said, "OK, what do you guys think we should do about this vote in the UN?" He first turned to Tony Lake who was head of Policy Planning and very involved in the African negotiations and Tony said, "Well, it is really important that we keep leverage over South Africa, although this was a despicable act and something that we certainly can't justify. The only way we can have that kind of leverage is to avoid condemnation so I think we should abstain."

He turned to Dick Moose, who was our Assistant Secretary for African Affairs and Dick said, "Well, we have this contact group of five western countries which are negotiating Southern Africa issues with South Africa. The contact group has never split on a UN vote. The British are going to abstain. We can't afford to have the contact group split. It would be terrible for our negotiating effort. We should abstain. As awful as it was for the South Africans to do...we should abstain."

He turned to Peter Tarnoff who was his executive assistant and executive secretary of the department. Peter said, "Well, this is Lord Carrington's first communication with you. He has always been very supportive of us. And I think we should be forthcoming. As terrible as it was, what the South Africans did, I think we should abstain." And finally Muskie turned to me. And being a good staffer and knowing which way the wind was blowing, I said, "I think we should abstain."



## Library of Congress

Muskie looked at us all and said, “ I appreciate your views, but I have decided that what we are going to do is condemn South Africa.” And all of us sort of rocked back in our chairs and said, “ Condemn South Africa? Why would you want to condemn them?” He looked at us and said, “What they did was wrong.” And he picked up his golf bag and walked out the door. And we looked at one another and said, “ WRONG!! What does wrong have to do with it?” I mean there is a contact group and there is leverage and there is influence but “wrong”! What is wrong, it has to do with foreign policy. Those were our instructions, and we voted to condemn and, surprisingly enough, the other four members of the contact group voted to condemn as well, because they didn't want to see the contact group unity broken and they wanted to be with us. It was a lesson that I keep in mind, that once in a while it is always good to ask yourself, “What is the right thing?” Because if it is one thing that makes America different, it is that we try to do the right thing.

In conclusion, there really are two State Departments. Two Foreign Services. You have got the traditional one overseas where reporting is really your crucial function. Managing the Embassy or taking care of destitute Americans is the traditional Foreign Service work. The other Foreign Service is the one here in Washington which is a bureaucratic one, where you need substantive skills and knowledge. That is the “sine qua non”. You have to know refugee statistics for Thailand. You have to know how FBO functions. But, without tradecraft, without a network, without making the system work, you are going to be ineffectual. And you are not going to matter. There are few people in the State Department who are good at both. There are fewer people who like both.

But if you are one of those people who are good at both or one of the fewer people who like both, I close with a small pitch to remember NEA. Being the most effective bureau in the State Department and the one that really appreciates the people who are good at both and like both, you can always find a home there. If you want to relax, if you like those little collars with the things underneath that makes your tie stand up, if you like...female officers...if you like the pin stripe suits that the ladies wear...if you like those kinds of

## Library of Congress

things. Go try another bureau and relax for a couple years and then when you are ready for some real action, and serious foreign service work and bureaucratic work, come to me and let me know.

That's it in forty minutes. You all are now successful bureaucrats. Congratulations. I am sure you will go out and protect your bureaus' interests. If you have any thoughts, questions, denigrating comments...I'll be glad to accept them.

End of interview